

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2022 John McCain Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on the Rule of Law and Public Service

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0008635

Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Study of the U.S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS)

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by Office of Academic Exchange Programs' Study of the U.S. Branch, for the FY 2022 John McCain Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on the Rule of Law and Public Service. Your proposal must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying solicitation, the solicitation is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department of State and your organization are outlined below.

The responsibilities of the award recipient are as follows:

1. Design, oversee, and implement one five-week John McCain Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders (SUSI) on the Rule of Law and Public Service for up to 20 undergraduate students from military and law enforcement colleges and universities beginning no earlier than June 2023;
2. Oversee the program curriculum and other activities to ensure that they align with program goals and objectives;
3. Create program calendar and academic syllabus and send to ECA for final review and approval;
4. Create and develop virtual program offerings in lieu of in-person programming as necessary and upon request by ECA. In conjunction with U.S. embassies and consulates, coordinate logistical and administrative arrangements for participants such as a pre-departure orientation; airport pick-up and drop off; lodging and meals; domestic travel and airline baggage allowances; medical treatment; and the disbursement of program funds, including travel allowances;
5. Prepare DS-2019 forms for all participants and expedite delivery of these forms to U.S. embassies well in advance of program start dates to allow for scheduling of J-visa interviews at the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate abroad;

6. Enroll the participants in ECA's health benefits program, Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), and/or other health benefits plan as directed by ECA for the duration of the SUSI and issue health benefits identification cards for each participant;
7. Develop health and safety protocols to protect the welfare of all participants. Protocols should include plans to specifically address participant health and safety in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic;
8. Conduct a virtual pre-departure orientation for participants;
9. Disburse international travel allowances to participants;
10. Develop and implement, in coordination with ECA, a media (including social media) outreach plan to promote the program;
11. Ensure strict compliance with the U.S. State Department branding and signage requirements at events, in remarks, in program documentation, and online in all websites and social media posts;
12. Inform and consult with ECA about any program or participant problems, emergencies, or other issues as well as the progress of necessary action;
13. In coordination with U.S. embassies and consulates, arrange and purchase international round-trip travel for participants as well as any travel related to visa issuance;
14. Prepare and print certificates of completion for participants who successfully complete the program;
15. Assume overall responsibility for complying with all applicable tax treaties and Federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for participants;
16. Provide participants with follow-on guidance and resources and facilitate continued interaction among participants after the conclusion of the SUSI;
17. Conduct an evaluation strategy that links outcomes of the SUSI to stated program goals and objectives to ensure that the SUSI meets comparable and high levels of quality in fulfilling program goals;
18. Create and maintain a database of program alumni that includes alumni success and impact stories to be shared with ECA;
19. Manage all ECA funds for this activity, including submitting required reports to ECA by the established deadlines; and
20. Provide reasonable accommodations for participant needs, including any necessary disability accommodations.

The responsibilities of the Department are as follows:

1. Provide oversight, advice, and assistance to the award recipient, including final approvals of key project plans and activities;
2. Review and provide input on the syllabus, program calendar, pre-departure materials, and other written materials;
3. Coordinate and oversee all communications with participating U.S. embassies and consulates regarding the recruitment and selection of participants and other aspects of the program. ECA will make final participant selections and provide a list of selected finalists to the implementing partner;
4. Issue the participants' J-1 visas;

5. Monitor the program through regular communication with the award recipient and site visits, as necessary;
6. Collaborate with the recipient on the media engagement plan and approve all promotional materials;
7. Review and approve plans for alumni follow-on activities;
8. Review and approve all proposed key personnel;
9. Review quarterly or semi-annual program reports and weekly updates during the SUSI;
10. Assist with participant emergencies, including, but not limited to, medical emergencies, mental health issues, evacuation, and repatriation;
11. Liaise with relevant U.S. embassies, consulates, the recipient, and other relevant parties as it relates to crisis management; and
12. Conduct site visits and debriefing sessions with the participants, virtually or in-person, on an as-needed basis.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Overview

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State invites proposal submissions for the design and implementation of one five-week John McCain Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) for Student Leaders on the Rule of Law and Public Service. The five-week SUSI should be designed for a multinational group of up to 20 undergraduate students from military and law enforcement colleges and universities. Proposals should present an imaginatively designed academic residency and integrated educational study tour that includes leadership and skills development, cultural activities, community service, and substantive opportunities to interact with diverse groups of Americans. The SUSI will take place in summer 2023.

All aspects of the program, including classwork, presentations, reading and writing assignments, leadership and skills development sessions, workshops, site visits, and the study tour should be integrated to emphasize the SUSI theme and related sub-topics. The program must also contribute to the participants' understanding of the United States more broadly, including the history and evolution of U.S. society, culture, values, and institutions. The NOFO for this competition gives further guidance on the substance of the program and theme. The conception and structure of the SUSI are the responsibility of the award recipient. It is essential that proposals provide a full, detailed, and comprehensive narrative describing how the recipient will achieve the objectives of the program. A sample academic program, including lectures, discussions, presentations, site visits, etc. should be included. Proposals will be reviewed on the basis of the review criteria listed in the NOFO.

B. Program Dates

The anticipated award date for the cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2022 and end on or about August 31, 2026. The SUSI should begin no earlier than June 1, 2023

and should conclude no later than August 15, 2023. The SUSI should last approximately 36 days, including travel days.

C. Program Administration

Applicants' proposals must discuss their capacity to successfully manage international exchange programs, including institutional strengths such as relevant experience, departments, and major administrative units. Proposals should include a staffing plan that details how staff will share responsibilities.

The award recipient must designate an **academic director** who will be present through the academic program in its entirety to ensure the continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the academic program, including the study tour. The academic director will design the syllabus, ensuring activities align with the themes and goals of the overall program. The academic director will plan and implement the program, oversee day-to-day management of the SUSI, and monitor program participants. In addition, an **administrative director** or coordinator must be assigned to oversee overall program support services, budgetary, logistical, reporting, and other administrative arrangements. Typically, the administrative director serves as ECA's primary point of contact. The administrative director will be required to attend an administrative briefing that will take place either virtually or in-person in Washington, DC, at least six weeks before the start of the program.

Program coordinators and/or graduate student assistants may be employed to carry out clerical duties and to assist participants with their day-to-day needs but should not act as the participants' principal points of contact. Other staff may be designated as appropriate. Applicant organizations may choose to incorporate qualified "cultural ambassadors," "graduate mentors," or another appropriate name. These "ambassadors" must exhibit cultural sensitivity, an understanding of the program's objectives, and a willingness to accompany the foreign participants throughout the SUSI.

D. Participants

The SUSI will host approximately 20 foreign undergraduate students from military and law enforcement colleges and universities. Participants may come from any world region. ECA will determine the participating countries in consultation with the Department of State's regional bureaus and posts. ECA will make the final decisions regarding participating countries based upon Department priorities.

All participants will be between the ages of 18 and 25 and fully proficient in English. They will be highly motivated undergraduate students from military and law enforcement academies, colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher education, who demonstrate leadership through their personal, academic, and professional activities. The participants will come from a diverse range of communities and backgrounds with an emphasis on underserved and disadvantaged groups and those who have little or no prior international experience. The award

recipient will NOT participate in the recruitment or selection of candidates. U.S. embassies and consulates will identify and nominate candidates and ECA will make the final selections of participants. Every effort will be made to select a gender-balanced group. A final participant list will be sent to the award recipient prior to the start of the SUSI.

ECA is committed to ensuring that student leaders with disabilities are able to participate fully in the program through reasonable accommodations and support. The award recipient will be responsible in providing reasonable accommodations that will allow for a full and engaging experience for all participants during the SUSI.

E. Program

The SUSI should be no more than five weeks in length and include up to a four-week academic residency at a U.S. college and a one- to two-week educational study tour. The academic residency component should be a specially designed and well-integrated seminar that imaginatively combines lectures, case studies, discussions, readings, debates, site visits, and regional travel into a coherent program. Applicants are encouraged to design a creative program that draws upon institutional strengths, including expertise on the SUSI themes through faculty and other resources.

The themes covered under this SUSI are the Rule of Law and Public Service. The academic residency should contribute to participants' deeper understanding of the United States, while at the same time providing useful skills and concepts for future leaders. In addition to topics related to the overall themes, the SUSI should also address the influence of democracy, civil rights, social inclusion, freedom of expression, equality, and diversity on U.S. culture and society.

Please note: The Study of the U.S. Branch may request that the recipient modify the academic residency and/or educational travel programs. Similarly, the recipient, in consultation with the Study of the U.S. Branch, may also wish to make program modifications.

Academic Residency: The academic residency component should:

- Consist of a carefully integrated series of interactive lectures, case studies, panel presentations, seminar discussions, debates, simulations, individual and group classroom activities, interactive workshops, and reading assignments.
- Be tailored for this particular group of foreign students from military or law enforcement colleges and universities and include discussions of issues relevant to the theme. It must not replicate an existing lecture course, survey, or graduate seminar designed for American degree candidates.
- Encourage active student participation in the educational process. The curriculum design should consider that the participants may have little or no prior knowledge of the United

States and varying degrees of comfort in expressing their opinions. While participants are required to have sufficient English to fully participate in the program, they may have different levels of ability to speak or read English.

- Include course presenters who represent diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and occupational fields on the topics and issues to be explored. In addition to host institution faculty, the SUSI should include other relevant professionals as speakers (e.g., in government, military, private sector, religious and civic organizations, and the creative arts). Women and minorities should be appropriately represented as speakers and presenters in all programs.
- Allot time for discussion at each session and throughout the program to allow for questions and a collegial exchange of views among participants and presenters.
- Include **at least two leadership or skills development sessions** per week that should build participants' leadership capacity. These workshops should be creative, highly interactive, team-oriented, and encourage participants to find ways of applying their new skills during and after the program. The recipient may decide to recruit qualified instructors for these sessions from other organizations.
- Include **at least one hands-on volunteer activity** with a local community service organization for participants to experience first-hand the value of volunteerism. These activities should also serve as an opportunity to meet and interact with diverse Americans including veterans outside of an academic setting.
- Include day trips and excursions designed to reinforce the academic curriculum and deepen participants understanding of the United States, including historical sites, schools, neighboring towns or cities, and similar.
- Be intensive, yet leave sufficient free time for individual interests, social activities, exercise, and relaxation. The program schedule should include adequate time for reading and preparation of class assignments. Supervised, optional cultural and weekend activities (such as group nights at the theater, concerts, sporting events, and city tours) are encouraged and should offer the students opportunities to experience the diversity of the United States while fostering group cohesion.

Study Tour: The educational travel program for the SUSI should:

- Directly complement and reinforce the academic residency.
- Be arranged and led by the SUSI's academic director and principal SUSI staff.
- Be between one and two weeks in length.

- Include a visit to at least one region of the United States that is different from the host institution's region, and time in Washington, DC.
- Include an appropriate mix of professional-level meetings relating to the academic objectives, visits to cultural institutions, and recreational activities.

F. Logistical Considerations

- **Housing and meal arrangements** are an important dimension of program planning and must be discussed in detail in the proposal. In general, participants should be housed on campus in university dorms or similar designated university housing, ideally within walking distance to daily classes. If possible, participants should have access to kitchen facilities, either in their own rooms or in a common room. A cafeteria meal plan combined with a cash allowance for food that will permit participants to cook or eat on campus or at local restaurants is strongly recommended. Participants may experience difficulties with American eating customs due to religious or other dietary restrictions, cultural differences, and availability of familiar foods. Program staff should be prepared to discuss such problems with the participants and seek solutions. To the extent permitted by budget limitations, participants should receive up to the U.S. government per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses at the various program locales. See <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> for current U.S. government per diem rates.
- **Participant health and safety** is an ECA priority. The recipient should take into account the health, safety, and welfare of participants at all times during the program. This includes assisting participants to understand the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits program and to navigate the complex healthcare system in the United States. The recipient should also help participants understand and navigate the national, state, local, and campus policies as they relate to COVID-19.
- **Participant Forms** are required from each participant before the recipient can issue DS-2019s to participants. Required forms include but are not limited to SUSI terms and conditions, a medical form, and a media release form. The recipient is responsible for dispersing and collecting signed forms from participants. The recipient should notify ECA of any potential concerns or issues. All forms should be safeguarded since they contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII).
- **Virtual pre-departure orientations** (PDOs) should be organized by the recipient for all participants to prepare for the program. Topics may include, but are not limited to: setting expectations, U.S. cultural norms, diversity and inclusion, cross-cultural adjustment, health and safety guidelines and practices, and logistics. Pre-departure materials should be available to participants online or emailed at least six weeks before

the start of the program. If needed, the award recipient should make arrangements to send hard copies of these materials by express mail to the closest U.S. embassy or directly to the participants.

- **An administrative orientation** to the United States and to the host campus for the participants should address administrative details of the program, identify campus and local resources, and provide general information that will facilitate the participants' adjustment to daily life in a new cultural environment. Important topics to be addressed should include security, medical problems and protocols, harassment and reporting, and availability of foods to which participants are accustomed or which meet specific dietary requirements.
- **An academic orientation** should provide participants with a concise overview of the program, including principal objectives and major themes. The academic director should also use this opportunity to discuss guidelines for behavior that encourages active participation by all class members, academic integrity, respect for the views of other participants, concise comments and questions that keep the students on-topic, and other parameters that will promote effective class discussion throughout the program.
- **Opening and closing events** (e.g., lunch, dinner, or reception) should formally inaugurate and close the program. These events typically include representatives from the host institution as well as individuals from the broader local community.
- **Access to resources** should be arranged, including campus libraries; computer and internet facilities; gymnasium or fitness center; health services; on-campus disability resources; counseling services; and local and national newspapers, periodicals, radio, and television. The recipient should conduct a formal orientation to library services during the first week of the program and should provide participants with computer training and technical support, as needed. Reasonable accommodations should be made for any participants with disabilities. Applicants should budget up to \$2,000 for reasonable accommodations.
- **Monitoring and evaluations** should take place on a regular basis to ensure that staff promptly respond to academic, administrative, and personal problems. At the conclusion of the SUSI, a formal evaluation session should be conducted to allow participants to comment on all aspects of the program. Additionally, the recipient will be responsible for conducting post-program evaluations and collecting alumni success stories to share with ECA. The recipient may wish to share data on how these exchange programs also affect U.S. communities.
- **Travel allowances** should be disbursed to each participant to support travel to and from the United States. Each participant should receive \$100 total.

Please note: All participants will be required to return to their home countries immediately upon the conclusion of the program. Travel to visit family or friends elsewhere in the United States will NOT be permitted *before, during, or after* the program, including on unscheduled weekends during the academic residency. Family or friends may be permitted to visit the participants while the latter are in residence at the host institution, at the discretion of the recipient and in consultation with ECA, provided that such visits will not prove disruptive to the program. At no time will family or friends be permitted to accompany the participants during scheduled program activities, whether such activities are mandatory or optional. Institute staff should arrange to escort all participants to the airport for their return travel and to remain at the airport until the students have checked in and entered the security departure area.

G. Fostering Mutual Understanding

ECA's mission is to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations. In order to promote this mission, the program should provide ample opportunities to attend informal and formal gatherings of ordinary Americans from a variety of ethnic, social, and professional backgrounds as well as with U.S. college students. Programs should strive to include as many of the following components as possible:

- A weekend-long home stay with a local family;
- A structured way for participants to present their country's history and culture to diverse groups of Americans;
- A peer system where international participants are paired with U.S. students for individualized recreational evening and weekend activities;
- Classes with U.S. students or accommodations with U.S. roommates, if possible;
- Informal group activities between the participants and members of the local community; and/or,
- To the extent possible, mentor relationships between participants and academically-appropriate host institution professors.

H. Alumni Outreach/Follow-on Activities

Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activities (with minimal ECA support) that ensures ECA-supported programs are not isolated events. Proposed follow-on activities for alumni must reflect the goals and objectives of the program and must contribute to ECA's mission to foster mutual understanding among the people of other countries and the people of the United States. The proposal should include an outline of follow-on alumni programming (including a timeline), information on how it will be coordinated with existing alumni efforts, and a description of how the recipient will foster and maintain long-term linkages with alumni. Examples of successful past follow-on activities include, but are not limited to: structured mentoring programs, alumni reunions or workshops, monthly web discussions, reverse exchanges, small grant competitions, cooperative publications by participants and their American

peers, and distance learning opportunities for alumni. Applicants should incorporate the online community on the International Exchange Alumni website (Alumni.State.Gov) into their alumni outreach plans.

Follow-on activities should be well-developed but also remain flexible enough to allow for changes based on the needs of the participants. Alumni activities should be financed using the line item budgeted for follow-on activities (up to \$5,000) as well as significant cost-sharing by the applicant organization. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and the sample budget template for additional information.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)

Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," (only required for organizations if its representations and certifications have not been completed in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If an organization is exempt from registering in SAM.gov, then it would still need to provide the form as part of its application.)

- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), form 990 Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required for organizations that engage in lobbying activities), etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary: In one double-spaced page, Times New Roman font, size 12, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - d. Fields covered
 - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative: In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, Times New Roman font, size 12, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Supplemental Information:

1. A sample calendar of activities and syllabus
2. Letters of endorsement
3. Resumes and CVs (resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
4. First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

Detailed Budget

All budget guidelines must be followed. The budget should indicate any cost sharing in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to the program from sources other than the U.S. Department of

State. See standard guidelines (PSI) in the Solicitation Package for information on cost sharing and the cost of audits.

You may request a budget template in Excel format by contacting Christina Dinh and Jose Marrero at DinhCB@state.gov and MarreroJA@state.gov. Please note that you are not required to use this template. There are three tabs in this document, the Budget Guidelines, Budget Categories, and the Detailed Budget Template. Applicants should complete tabs 2-3, where applicable. You are urged to be as detailed and specific as possible, adding line items if needed. You may wish to include any of the listed allowable costs.

Allowable costs include but are not limited to:

- Staff salaries and benefits (fringe benefits should be stated separately from salary costs.) Each staff person must be listed separately. Provide the percentage of time spent on the program;
- Institute costs including, but not limited to, honoraria for speakers (not to exceed \$250 per day), educational materials, lodging, room rental(s), welcome and farewell events, and participant admissions;
- Travel costs including, but not limited to, round trip international airfare, visa travel, ground transportation, domestic travel, and other transit costs;
- Per participant allowances including baggage allowance, international travel allowance (\$100), book and cultural allowance (up to \$200 for each), and meals and incidentals;
- Follow-on activities (up to \$5,000)
- Other direct expenses;
- Tax withholding;
- Wire transfer fees;
- Consultant fees;
- Printing and publishing;
- Supplies;
- Postage (optional \$200 per participant maximum);
- Web hosting;
- Communications (e.g. participant cell phones or SIM cards);
- Health benefits, as necessary;
- Medical costs including, but not limited to, medically required quarantine (outside of medical facilities covered under the health benefits provider);
- Reasonable accommodations (suggested \$2,000);
- Travel costs for administrative briefing in Washington, DC;
- Indirect costs; and
- Other cost categories as necessary.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Please be sure to include a Summary Budget on a separate page before the Detailed Budget. The Summary Budget should clearly indicate the number of program participants and provide an overall unit cost per participant as well as a unit cost breakdown by budget category. A sample of this format is provided on the second tab of the sample budget.

Following the Detailed Budget, please include a Budget Narrative that concisely explains how costs were calculated and the rationale for including them in the budget. Please make note of the following in the Budget Narrative:

- If you do not have an established negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), please explain what costs are excluded when calculating the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base in accordance with 2 CFR 200.68 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) and 2 CFR 200.414 Indirect (F&A) Cost.
- List and explain the participant support costs.
- State if the above two questions are part of your organization's existing policies and if they are consistently applied in all budgets throughout your organization.

Applicant institutions should attempt to maximize cost-sharing throughout the program by enlisting the support of the U.S. private sector, including foundations and corporations. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The solicitation document indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.** For further information regarding this program, call Program Officers Christina Dinh and Jose Marrero at (202) 340-3699 and (202) 676-7945, ECA/A/E/USS; email: DinhCB@state.gov and MarreroJA@state.gov.